

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 610
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 6TH FEBRUARY, 2024

PROMOTION OF CHEMICAL FREE NATURAL FARMING

610. SHRI MAHABALI SINGH:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is formulating any action plan to promote Chemicals-Free Natural farming in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to promote the use of drones for agriculture and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether funds have been arranged for the farmers through National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री (SHRI ARJUN MUNDA)

(a): Government is promoting natural farming as chemical free farming since 2019-2020 through a sub-scheme namely Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati (BPKP) under Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY). So far 4.09 lakh ha area has been sanctioned and Rs. 70.13 Crore has been released for natural farming in 8 states under BPKP across the country. An area of 1.48 lakh ha have also been sanctioned for promotion of natural farming along the Ganga Corridor. To motivate farmers to adopt natural farming and to enhance the reach of natural farming, the Government has formulated National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF) as a separate and independent scheme by up scaling the BPKP.

(b): For the benefit of farmers, Government of India is promoting Drones in the field of Agriculture which will help in infusing advanced technology, improve efficiency, enhance crop yield and reduce cost of operation.

Under Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) financial assistance @100% of the cost of drone up to a maximum of Rs. 10 lakhs per drone is provided for its purchase and demonstration on the farmers' fields by the institutes under Indian Council of

Agricultural Research (ICAR), Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institutes, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), State Agriculture Universities (SAUs), State and other Central Government Agricultural Institutions/Departments and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) of Government of India engaged in agricultural activities. The Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs) are provided grants up to 75% of the cost of Kisan Drone for its demonstrations on the farmers' fields. A contingency expenditure of Rs.6000 per hectare is provided to these implementing agencies that do not want to purchase drones but will hire drones for demonstrations from Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs), Hi-tech Hubs, Drone Manufacturers and Start-Ups. The contingent expenditure to implementing agencies that purchase drones for drone demonstrations is limited to Rs.3000 per hectare. In order to make available drone services to farmers on rental basis, financial assistance @ 40% up to a maximum of Rs. 4.00 lakhs are provided for purchase of drones by CHCs under Cooperative Society of Farmers, FPOs and Rural entrepreneurs. Agriculture graduates establishing CHCs are eligible to receive financial assistance @ 50% of the cost of drone up to a maximum of Rs.5.00 lakhs per drone. For purchase of drones on individual ownership basis, the Small and Marginal, Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe, Women and North Eastern State farmers are provided financial assistance @ 50% of the cost up to a maximum of Rs. 5.00 lakhs and other farmers @ 40% up to a maximum of Rs. 4.00 lakhs.

Under SMAM, funds amounting to Rs. 141.39 crores have been released towards Kisan Drone promotion which includes Rs. 52.50 crores released to the ICAR for purchase of Kisan Drones and organizing their demonstrations on the farmers' fields through 100 KVKs, 75 ICAR institutions and 25 SAUs. The funds have been provided to the State Governments for supply of 461 Kisan Drone to farmers on subsidy and establishment of 1585 Kisan Drone CHCs to provide drone services to the farmers. 263 Agri-Drones have been procured by 193 Institutions of ICAR across the country. 260 personnel from these institutions have undergone Drone Pilot Training. With a view to create awareness on the advantages of drone in agriculture, these Institutions have carried out 15,075 drone demonstrations on nutrients, fertilizers, chemicals (insect & pest) applications following Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) covering 16,471 hectare area.

The Government has also recently approved Central Sector Scheme "NAMO DRONE DIDI" for providing drones to the Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) with an outlay of Rs. 1261 Crores. The scheme aims to provide drones to 15000 selected Women SHGs for providing rental services to farmers for agriculture purpose (application of fertilizers and pesticides). Of the total 15,000 drones, first 500 drones will be procured by Lead Fertilizer Companies (LFCs) in 2023-24, using their internal resources for distribution to selected SHGs. Remaining 14500 drones will be provided under this scheme during 2024-25 and 2025-26 and Central Financial Assistance @ 80% of the cost of drone and accessories/ancillary charges up to a maximum of Rs. 8.0 lakhs will be provided to the women SHGs for purchase of drones. The Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) of SHGs may raise the balance amount (total cost of procurement minus subsidy) as loan under National Agriculture Infra Financing Facility (AIF). Interest subvention @ 3% on the AIF loan will be provided to the CLFs. The scheme will help in infusing advance technology in agriculture

for improved efficiency, enhanced crop yield and reduced cost of operation for the benefit of farmers. The scheme will also provide sustainable business and livelihood support to SHGs and they would be able to earn additional income of at least Rs. 1.0 lakhs per annum.

(c): As informed by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) they have initiated JIVA programme under Watershed & Tribal Development Funds to promote an agro-ecological approach through chemical-free Natural Farming in the completed Watershed & Tribal Development Projects on a pilot basis. Incidentally, the NGOs who have implemented Watershed & Tribal Development Projects are acting as implementing agencies of JIVA agro-ecology programme (Natural Farming).
